

Representative **SAMANTHA KERKMAN** *Legislative Update*

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REP. KERKMAN'S 2007-2008 AGENDA

- ✓ **Building Wisconsin's Economy**
- ✓ **Holding the Line on Taxes and Spending**
- ✓ **Investing in our Children's Future**
- ✓ **Making Health Care Affordable**

REP. KERKMAN NAMED WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION "Legislator of the Year"

I was extremely honored to receive the State American Legion Legislator of the Year Award. As your state representative, I will continue to honor the service and sacrifices of our veterans by working to make certain their needs are met now and in the future.



Rep. Kerkman pictured above with Ronald Hessil, Kenosha County Commander, upon accepting the award at the State American Legion Convention in Green Bay.

VETERANS BENEFITS APPROVED AND SIGNED INTO LAW

- **Wisconsin GI Bill Funding**
Eligible veterans can receive waivers of 100% tuition and fees at any UW System school or technical college. The waivers can be used for 128 credits or 8 semesters, whichever is longer.
- **Retraining Grants**
Increased funding for the Veterans Retraining Grant Program. Based on financial need, veterans may qualify for up to \$3,000 a year for job retraining.
- **"Mission Welcome Home" Program**
Continued funding for this program which is designed to provide outreach to local groups that help returning vets successfully transition back to civilian life.
- **Assistance to Needy Veterans Program**
Funding increased and limits raised on how much health care and other aid eligible veterans can receive through the program.
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Assistance**
Funding provided for outreach services for veterans experiencing PTSD.
- **Veterans Registry**
The WI Dept. of Veterans Affairs has been directed to establish a voluntary statewide registry to collect information from veterans and inform them on health issues such as PTSD and Gulf War Syndrome.

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SPRING 2008



State Representative

Samantha J. Kerkman

Dear Friends:

It has been an honor to serve you as your state representative over the past two-year session – my fourth since first being elected to the Assembly in 2000. This has been a challenging term, with work on the state biennial budget dominating a good portion of the first year. As you may know, work continues on a budget adjustment bill, made necessary because of reduced revenues coming into the state. This is due in large part to the downturn of our nation's economy.

This *Legislative Update* is designed to let you know some of the highlights of this session, and to inform you of some of the legislation I've personally been working on.

The contacts I receive from district residents in the form of phone calls, letters, e-mails, or personal contacts are invaluable to me as I strive to represent the views of the good people of the 66th Assembly District. Keep the comments coming. My staff and I are here to assist you with any state government-related concerns you may have.

Again, I am so proud to be your voice in the State Assembly. I hope you find this newsletter helpful. I look forward to continuing our work to make Wisconsin a great place in which to live, raise our families, work, and retire.

Sincerely,

Samantha

Samantha J. Kerkman
State Representative
66th Assembly District

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Committee Assignments

- **Ways and Means** (*Chair*)
- **Joint Committee on Audit**
- **Judiciary and Ethics**
- **Consumer Protection and Personal Privacy**
- **Homeland Security and State Preparedness** (*Vice Chair*)
- **Jobs and the Economy**

REPRESENTATIVE SAMANTHA KERKMAN

Legislative Update

SPRING 2008



Jim Wanasek is shown here with (L-R) Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch, Rep. Robin Vos and Rep. Kerkman.

Burlington's Jim Wanasek Honored as "Hometown Hero"

The State Assembly recognized Burlington resident Jim Wanasek as the first "Hometown Hero" of the 2007-2008 Legislative Session. Recipients are selected by Speaker Mike Huebsch or Minority Leader Jim Kreuser and are awarded to citizens who go above and beyond in service to their communities.

In presenting the award to Wanasek, Speaker Huebsch called him a shining example of that spirit in Southeast Wisconsin. Jim is well known throughout the area for his tireless volunteerism and generous financial support for numerous community events and activities.

Following the award presentation, a reception in Jim's honor was held in the Assembly Parlor.

REP. KERKMAN'S LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Final Rights

People often share their wishes for funeral arrangements and disposition of their remains (burial, cremation, etc.) with family members or friends. However, those final wishes were not legally binding. I authored legislation that will allow individuals to make these decisions for themselves and ensure they will be carried out through a legal document. Act 58 gives people peace of mind in knowing that their end of life decisions will be honored.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

At the request of a local family, Senator Wirch and I introduced legislation to require the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in hotels, apartments, dormitories, and certain other residential buildings. The Hekenberger family tragically lost their parents to carbon monoxide poisoning while the couple vacationed at a northern Wisconsin resort. Act 205 will hopefully help to prevent such deaths in the future.

Police Dog Exemption from Quarantine Rules

At the urging of Officer Eric Klinkhammer of the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department, I introduced legislation that would provide an exception from the quarantine rules for police dogs. Currently, any dog that bites is required to be quarantined for 10 days. Although police dogs are still required to receive three vet checks within 10 days following a bite, enactment of Act 37 will ensure these dogs, a valuable asset to police departments and the communities they serve, will not be taken out of service.



Governor Doyle signing a bill to aid economic development and job creation in Southeastern Wisconsin as (L-R) Rep. Kerkman, Rep. Kim Hixon, Sen. Bob Wirch, Rep. John Steinbrink and Rep. Jim Kreuser look on.

NEW STATE HOTLINE FOR GOVERNMENT FRAUD AND WASTE

A 24-hour toll free hotline has been set-up for the public to report incidents of fraud, waste and mismanagement in state government. Callers' identities will remain confidential, but people are encouraged to be as specific as possible with the information they provide.

You can access the hotline at:

1-877-FRAUD-17

—or—

1-877-372-8317



LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Building Wisconsin's Economy – We need to continue to grow our economy and help businesses have the opportunity to create jobs. I supported legislation to give local governments the tools they need to attract and retain companies in Wisconsin.

Seniors – I supported FamilyCare which will ensure that seniors are able to stay in their homes longer and remain active in our communities. I voted for legislation that would eliminate taxes on pension income making it more affordable to stay in Wisconsin. In addition, SeniorCare was protected so that over 107,000 of our state's seniors have access to affordable prescription drugs.

Education – I have made it my mission to visit the great schools in my district over the past eight years. This has given me the knowledge to fight to continue our commitment for funding K-12 education at a record level of \$12.3 billion over the next two years. In addition, I supported the

virtual schools compromise for parents who seek other educational options for students in the K-12 educational setting.

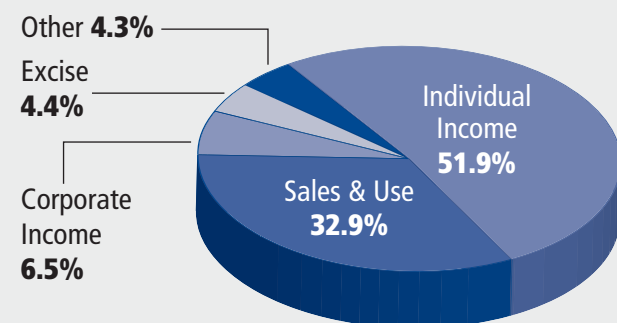
Health Care – I believe access to affordable health care is critical to the residents of Wisconsin. I've worked to ensure that eligibility and benefits for Medical Assistance, BadgerCare and SeniorCare are protected. I also supported legislation to allow health insurance premiums to be tax deductible.

Taxes – I continue to work to hold the line on tax increases. I supported the continuation of the property tax freeze on local governments. Levy increases are limited to 3.86% or net new growth. Also, beginning with the current tax year (2008), social security benefits will be completely exempt from the state income tax.

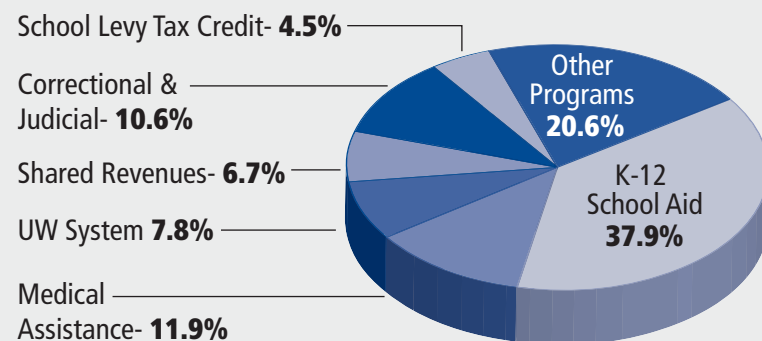
Election Reform – I supported legislation requiring a photo identification to vote at polling locations. My goal is to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

YOUR STATE TAX DOLLARS

Where the Money Comes From



Where the Money Goes



REP. KERKMAN'S E-NEWSLETTER UPDATES

Periodically, I send an e-mail newsletter to area residents to update them on legislative activities or other items of interest. If you would like to sign up to receive my "Capitol Insight" by e-mail, please contact my office at Rep.Kerkman@legis.wi.gov, and we'll add you to our list.



Junior Girl Scout Troop #638 from St. Charles School in Burlington spent a day at the Capitol earlier this year. The group is shown here with Governor Doyle in his conference room following a bill signing. Chaperones Joan Kawalec and Judy Halverson accompanied the girls to Madison.